

Why is it Important to Wait for Labor?

The risks of inducing labor early for non-medical reasons



The last few weeks of pregnancy can be really uncomfortable. It can be hard to sit, stand, and sleep. Sometimes women feel so bad, they ask their doctor or midwife to start labor early with medicine. This is called inducing labor.

Unless a woman has major health problems like diabetes or high blood pressure, inducing labor before 39 weeks can cause problems for you and your baby.

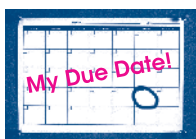
If you are healthy, it's best to wait for your body to go into labor on its' own. Your body knows best. Studies have found that when the baby's lungs and brain are fully formed, and the mother's body is ready, natural labor hormones are released.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists encourage women to wait for labor until at least 39 weeks. Try to be patient.

Possible Problems When Inducing Labor Early Without Medical Reasons

FOR BABY

- Your baby's brain grows 35 percent between 34-41 weeks. Each week, it matures more. Inducing labor early puts younger brains at risk.
- Baby's lungs start to clear fluid out the last weeks of pregnancy. If labor is started early, baby's lungs may not be ready, making breathing difficult.
- Due dates can be wrong, even with ultrasounds. If the baby comes too early, it may be premature and have:
 - Breathing problems
 - Infection
 - Blood sugar problems
 - Problems keeping skin warm
 - Feeding problems
 - Jaundice
 - Hospital readmission



FOR MOM

- You have a higher chance of a Cesarean delivery, especially if it's your first baby, and your body isn't ready. Inducing labor does not always work.
- Labor can be longer and more painful than normal. Sometimes labor contractions can come too close and stress the baby.
- Induced labor can take longer. This makes infections and heavy bleeding more likely.

EACH WEEK COUNTS!

